



AL BLOZIS*

William L. Dickinson HS

Athlete - Football/Shotput

Al Blozis gained initial fame as a Jersey City legend before dying tragically as an American hero.

He drew immediate attention upon his arrival at Dickinson because of his immense size, but by the time he graduated in 1938, he was known for much more.

Eventually filling out at 6-6 and 250 pounds, while in high school he was an All-State football player and set 24 records in shot put and discus. He also lettered in basketball and swimming.

Al went on to attend Georgetown, where he became a world-record holder in the shot put. He would have been the overwhelming favorite to win gold at the 1940 Olympics, but the games were cancelled because of the advent of World War II. He was so well known for his exploits that United Press International named him one of the three greatest athletes of 1941, along with boxer Joe Louis and golfer Ben Hogan. Al was also a standout football player at Georgetown, and upon his graduation in 1942, was drafted by the New York Giants, who saw him as an ideal tackle.

He became an All-Pro performer for the Giants. But all the while, ever since the United States had entered the war, he had wanted to serve his country. Each time he was rebuffed because of his size. Eventually he was accepted, and even set an Army record by tossing a hand grenade 94 yards at Officer Candidate School. After two full standout seasons with the Giants in 1942 and '43, he joined the team late in the 1944 season while on Army furlough. He helped the Giants reach the 1944 NFL championship game, where they lost 14-7 to the Green Bay Packers. Several weeks after, he shipped off to France to fight in the war. After an extended period of intense action in the frigid winter conditions, at the end of the day on Jan. 31, two men in his platoon failed to return. Al ventured into the dark to find them, but he, too, never returned. He was declared killed in action, and his remains were never recovered.

Al's heroism was recognized by the Giants, who retired his No. 32. He was also recognized posthumously throughout Jersey City, most notably at Dickinson, where the gym is named in his honor.

**Posthumous Award*